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Polish migrant youth in Scottish schools: Conflicted identity and family capital

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Abstract

The perspectives of migrant children and young people have been largely omitted in youth studies. Existing literature focuses predominantly on young people born to migrant parents in the host country while the problems of first generation of migrant youth have received limited attention. This paper focuses on first generation Polish migrants and their experiences in relation to school transition, new language learning and the changing family relationships in the new social environment. It draws on ethnographic research, including in-depth interviews collected from 17 young people (age 12-17) and their parents, as well as participant observation within homes and schools. Exploring the concept of family capital the paper builds on Bourdieu's the theory of cultural and social capital and Coleman's theory of social capital. It examines family support and cultural values, the transferability of family capital from one country to another in terms of educational success and social mobility, and the capacity of young people to draw on their family capital and to develop their own social capital in a host country. The findings are discussed with reference to the existing literature and the possible ways of supporting young people through the development of policies and school practices.

Key words: migrant youth, family migration, schooling choices, cultural and social capital, and social mobility

Introduction

Family as a unit of analysis is becoming more prevalent within public and academic debates. Children and young people's experiences of international migration and mobility have begun to attract interest in studies regarding migration and children/youth studies (e.g. Ní Laoire et al. 2011; Tanyas 2012). Researchers have often struggled to conceptualize migrant children and youth, and their families, giving way to a tendency to stereotype them as a 'problem' or 'model' in the host societies/education system and to overlook the complexity of culture and language in their lives (Suárez-Orozco and Carhill 2008: 87). Cultural and social capital is especially significant for migrant youth and their families as it shapes their identity and their sense of belonging in the majority culture (Hébert, Xiaohong Sun, and Kowch 2006). It has been debated whether young migrants and the children of migrants live between two cultures or form hybrid identities (Bhabha 1994). Previous literature on migrant youth culture has argued that such youth face an 'identity crisis' as they are alienated from their parents' culture while not being fully immersed in the host country's culture (Basgoz and Furniss 1985). Hoerder et al. (2006) uses the term 'transculturation' to explain that migrant youth continually change, incorporating diverse cultural ways of life to form new dynamic ones. Regarding migrant youth Suarez-Orozco and Qin (2006:180) found the mounting evidence which suggests that the individual who can move comfortably across cultural contexts and who is able to incorporate affective and instrumental dimensions of the cultures (s)he traverses, will have better outcomes in terms of educational and societal success.

In the context of migrant youth and their education the theory of cultural and social capital originally developed by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1971; Bourdieu 1986, 1993) and the theory of social capital developed by James S. Coleman (1988) may enable us to draw links between young people's experiences and practices in their family and school life. Both Bourdieu and Colman placed families at the centre of their conceptions regarding social capital. The original conceptualisation of social capital by Coleman identifies social capital as a resource within the family that consists of the relations between children and parents (and, when families include other members' relationships with them as well) (1988: S110). Social capital within the family, which gives the child access to the adult's human capital depends both on the physical presence of adults in the family and on the attention given by the adults to the child. The physical absence of adults may be described as a structural deficiency in family social capital (1988: S111). Concerning Colman's theory of social capital, Edwards, Franklin and Holland (2003: 4) argue that parents invest in their children, as the next generation of the family who will support them later in life, by being physically present, giving them attention and developing an intense relationship with them (which includes having discussions about their education and personal life). This investment enables children to increase their educational achievements and gain greater economic rewards later in life. This process of generating social capital within families links to social capital as a resource outside the family, where parents and their children are embedded in close local relations with the institutions of the community (1988: S113). Relationships between parents and children and their social ties outside the family create a dense social structure of norms, obligations and trust. Bourdieu's theory of social capital (1986) also involves

a focus on families although not exclusively. His work is also more complex, as he envisages interdependent links between social and other forms of capital (cultural, economic and symbolic). Bourdieu's ideas on capitals, that they are consciously transmitted and accumulated within and outside families, imply a creation and maintenance of social-class specific forms. In particular, education operates through the class-specific process of social and cultural capital and is underpinned by economic capital, including employment.

For migrant youth, cultural and social capital translates into the ability to take advantage of available resources to facilitate their integration into the host society (Hoerder, Hebert, and Schmitt 2006). Family support and cultural values are of key importance here. Some features of the family including verbal interaction and affective relationships between parents and children; extent of discipline and control; parents expectations regarding their children's achievements; and parents' beliefs and attributions (specified by Hess and Holloway 1984 and quoted by Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates 2008) contribute to children's educational success. These features can be regarded as dimensions of the family's culture capital (Bourdieu, 1984). A common language — a lingual code in Bernstein's (1971) term —represents a form of capital that purchases educational advantages. Bernstein (1971) argued that children from different social classes acquire different lingual codes (elaborated or restricted), with their use of language affecting the school's view of their ability. Education systems use, value and reward elaborated codes, as the middle class, who are concerned with transmission of knowledge which transcends shared meaning, control them (Furlong 2013: 60-61).

For migrant families, it takes an enormous amount of time and effort to acquire an elaborated code of the host society. Despite the rising number of Polish pupils in UK schools, the scholarly literature that looks specifically at the dynamics of the relations of Polish migrants within the educational field is still limited. Lopez Rodriguez (2010: 340) broadly discusses the reproduction in education (Bourdieu 1990) among Polish families in the UK and suggests it is not likely to be happening to the extent it does among native English families (Ball 2003; Devine 2004; Power, Edwards, and Wigfall 2003). In general terms, Lopez Rodriguez (2010: 352) argues that the educational field consists of all involved agents: migrant and other parents, children, schools and educational bodies. All these agents preoccupy certain positions and relate to another in that field and form a structure within which various forms of capital operate (Bourdieu, 1990). Migrants lack the cultural knowledge, expertise, and practices of insiders (Bourdieu 1986), and disadvantaged new migrants are deprived of this indispensable capital to access services of the host country's middle class. By disregarding the family language and culture capital the school may impact on migrant pupils' educational success and social adaptation. For example, teachers may reinforce disadvantage by having lower expectations regarding the ability of migrant pupils and may fail to offer adequate levels of encouragement.

This article examines the transferability of family culture capital from one country to another in terms of educational success and social mobility, and the capacity of young people to draw on their family capital and to develop their own social capital in a host country. It analyses the narratives collected from first generation migrant young people and their parents drawn from larger qualitative studies highlighting the realities of family capital recognition and use in intra-family relationships as well as

in the host society. The term migrant youth has been used to refer to young people born abroad or born in the host country from foreign-born parents. The first generation refers to young people who arrive around age twelve or older. This definition distinguishes them from the decimal generation '1.5', coined by Rumbaut (2004), which refers to migrant children under twelve and allows us to acknowledge the great importance of age at the time of migration in shaping young people's integration prospects and, in particular, English mastery and academic performance.

Research population

Over the last decade, the UK has experienced an unparalleled number of migrants from Poland. Subsequent to the European union (EU) enlargement in May 2004, hundreds of labour migrants from the new accession countries moved to the UK. Majority of the migrants (as high as 80 per cent) have been Polish nationals. Although they have often been portrayed as young, single and transient (Eade et al. 2006; Fihel et al. 2006), there has been an increase in the number of Poles settling for a potentially longer or permanent period and bringing their families to live in the UK (Ryan et al. 2009; White 2010). Research has shown that they occupy mostly low-skilled positions in the labour market and often do not use the skills and qualifications they possess (Moskal 2012). It is estimated that there are currently more than 70 000 Poles living in Scotland (Dietkow 2011). As a result, Polish nationals now constitute the largest ethnic minority in Scotland.

One unforeseen consequence of the increase in Polish migration to the UK has been the large number of Polish children and adolescents studying in British schools (D'Angelo and Ryan 2011). Young Polish migrants are also one of the fastest growing groups in the school-age population in Scotland. Their number has increased by about

1 000 every year since 2004. In 2012 there were over 8 000 Polish children and adolescents in Scottish schools (The Scottish Government, Pupil Census - Supplementary Data 2012). The number of pupils speaking Polish as a main home language constitute the largest population after students who speak English at home – 634 000 (The Scottish Government Pupil Census - Supplementary Data 2012). However, migrant pupils are not evenly distributed, resulting in increases and concentrations of pupils in only some areas and in particular schools. Cities remain the main centres of concentration, however rural areas are increasingly effected by migration.

Method

A larger qualitative study conducted among Polish children and young people, their families and teachers in various schools across Scotland, which examined the issue of intra-European mobility, education and integration provided the data for this paper. The paper narrows its focus to the experiences of young people as they transition into school, culture, language, social and family change post-migration, drawing on narrative interviews collected from seventeen young people between the ages of 12 and 17, including 8 males and 9 females, and their parents. All of the participants are first generation migrants, who were born in Poland and travelled to Scotland with or after their parent(s). Scotland was usually the first foreign country participants' had visited and resided in other than their country of origin. The length of time spent in Scotland ranged from a few months to 4 years, with the average being 2 years. They attended seven different secondary schools at the time of the interview. The opinions of the young people were centre-balanced by those of their parents (mostly mothers) who took part in the research. Interviews were conducted with young people and parents in their homes, with some having been conducted in schools, after classes.

The sample included participants from different areas in Scotland: urban (Edinburgh, Aberdeen), semi-urban (North Lanarkshire) and rural (Highlands). All the interviews with family members were conducted in Polish and were transcribed and translated into English. All the young people came to Scotland with limited or no knowledge of the English language. As participants were interviewed at different stages of their settlement process, their proficiency of English language varied.

The interviews collected from the young people and their parents generate a picture of the family choices and decisions concerning migration, education and the future. This paper examines young people's experiences as they made the transition into their new school in the UK. It examines the levels of family support and the social and cultural capital of young people by asking how the individual values the culture of origin; is he/she drawn to the new culture (or cultures)?; does he/she wish to be integrated into the new culture (or cultures) or does he/she find it alienating?. By exploring young people's feelings and sense of identity, this paper aims to investigate the possible tensions and conflicts, which may exist between migrant parents and their children.

Family capital and social and educational success post migration

Migration typically involves a transition and a massive revaluation of migrant capital, which is a matter of migration success (Kelly and Lusi 2006). With regards to cultural capital, some forms of capital are less transferable than others. Incorporated cultural capital, which was distinguished by Bourdieu (1986) from institutionalized and objectified culture capital, cannot be easily transferred. Incorporated cultural capital includes use of language, social competence, a degree of confidence and self-assurance. Language is a prime example here, however the same is true for other knowledge, for example knowledge about the jobmarket or about the functioning of

institutions and society. Knowledge about the educational or the job market is a case in point. For those families and persons with higher levels of educational and professional qualifications, the possibility of transferring their formal qualifications may also be difficult, since this form of institutionalised cultural capital is often not recognised in the new society and thus is devalued (Moskal 2012). An example illustrating this phenomenon is Isobel, the mother of 16-year-old Carol and her 10-year-old brother. Isobel was not working at the time of the interview. In Poland, she worked as an account manager for 15 years. She could not find a job in the UK with her qualifications due to a lack of English-language skills: Commenting on her prospects of finding a job, Isobel said ‘Probably, I will need to become a cleaner to start my professional career here, like most of the Polish.’

Limited language skills prevent Polish migrants from fully participating in the community. Strong family or community networks may provide negative social capital, which reproduces social inequality. Strong social networks with co-ethnics may isolate many migrants and lock them into specific ethnic niches (Ryan 2011). These strong social networks may produce some side effects to social stratification, for example frequently the members of the network can often only provide information about low-skilled or low paid jobs. This means that highly qualified migrants may fail to find appropriately demanding jobs if members of their network are in low-skilled occupations (Sumption 2009). Many Polish migrants downgrade to less skilled occupations once they reach the UK (Dustmann, Fratti and Preston 2008). However, Ryan et al. (2008: 687) suggests this downward social mobility may well be a temporary phenomenon to enable accumulation of capital by the migrant family, as well as of language skills by the children.

Many parents mentioned their children's future educational and job opportunities as a key reason for their family's migration. 'We moved here because we thought about the children, we wanted a better future for them and we wanted them to study,' said Carol's mother. D'Angelo and Ryan (2011) discuss the way in which Polish parents and children in England approach the new schools, showing that their attitude to schools and education is strongly influenced by their pre-migration experiences and by the culture of their country of origin. Lopez Rodriguez (2010: 340) argues that Polish working class parents display an almost 'middle-class' involvement in their children's education as their cultural capital, with their home practices and habitus being close to or compatible with the institutional habitus (Ball, 2003) of the educational field in the UK. In that case, the valuing of education and accessing the available meritocratic opportunities are not limited to the educationally privileged. Lopez Rodriguez (2010: 354) also highlights the educational efforts of Polish migrants and 'the dynamics of an interplay between objective structure and subjective agency' (Bourdieu 1977). She argues that 'a focus on children's academic fulfilment and gratification may in fact prevent newly arrived migrants, often from lower working class and underprivileged backgrounds – as seen in British terms – from delinquency and potential marginalisation.' For example, Olivia (15-year-old female) lives with her divorced mother (her father is in Poland) and 13-year-old brother Adam, in a rural area of the Scottish Highlands. Like many other Polish families, they recently settled into a poor social housing district on the outskirts of the town, which is marked with violence. Although coming from a middle-class educational background in Poland, Olivia's mother, like many Polish women, works in the local fish-processing factory. Both mother and daughter expressed disappointment with

their neighbourhood and social environment. Olivia who is very keen on doing well in school said, ‘When I arrived here I did not know English. I learnt it only for six months prior to arrival. I have additional English classes organised in school...I must learn English well. I want to be good in school.’

The majority of Polish families who participated in the study showed a high level of parental involvement in their children’s schooling, discipline tantamount to control, and an ethos of hard work. For example, Carol (16-year-old female) commented that she used to work harder in Polish schools, ‘I am used to the Polish system where I did everything for good marks, that was a motivation for me to get a good mark and my parents could be proud of me.’

Many parents encourage a range of qualities in their children, including responsibility, hard work, being pleased with achievement, social competence and access to critical social networks. They teach their children both how to use social capital and how to create their own social capital. The parents try to develop their children’s agency and indeed see this as an aim and outcome of their parental investment and the sacrifice of their time. For example, Adam (male, age 13) expressed the sense of responsibility he feels towards his family:

The important things for me are: to help to my family, so I should help my family; cooperation with the colleges here to cope with the language; I mean the Scottish language and the English language which is important when we need to go somewhere outside of Scotland. On my tree there is also the family, friends and learning.

For Adam, learning the language means that he is responsible and he has to cooperate and make friendships with Scottish peers in order to learn the language and cope in school and in the public sphere, so he could be helpful to the family.

For Polish migrant youth, in most cases, family capital seems to act against the socioeconomic disadvantages they experience. Polish labour migrant families seem to draw on the culture capital originating from the educational practices in their home country. It may place them in a privileged position educationally and possibly professionally in comparison with some other minority groups and may position them ahead of white British working-class pupils. Parallel to the importance attached to education, the overall educational achievement was high among participants.

This is the case when the families who have fallen in social stratification can still benefit from their cultural capital. As Flied (2003:14) suggests, culture capital can to some extent operate independently of economic status and even compensate for a lack of money and social power, as a part of a family's strategy to advance its social position.

Family capital and relationships with family members and peers

The 'success' in the new society may be measured by both parents and children in terms of how well the children are performing in school, learning the new language and making new friends (Adams and Shambleau 2006: 88). Although language proficiency is regarded in many countries as the vehicle for the integration of migrant children and a necessary part of belonging (Roer-Strier and Strier 2006: 103), it is misleading to simply equate language acquisition with acculturation into new society

(Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001). Language is just the most evident of the many issues faced by migrant youth, including making new friendships, adapting to the new school and culture, dealing with loss and loneliness, dealing with racism or anti-immigration sentiments, etc. (Reynolds 2008:5). Adam (male, 13 years) reports:

I am learning English faster than I thought I would be and I am very glad about the learning the language. The school is easy and I like to go to school here. I like also a new Polish friend who came to the same school after me. I do not like the people here, these Scottish girls I do not like in particular, I talk sincerely now, and they are very rude. The children are aggressive here and unpredictable. They often tell unpleasant things to me like 'Polish bastard', 'Fucking Poles' but I do not pay attention to what they say anymore, they talk like this to all the Polish kids.

Relationships with peers seem to be a significant social resource as well as a major issue. The participants frequently felt rejected by their peers or chose to build their social network with co-ethnic schoolmates. Olivia, like the majority of the other participants, pointed out that a lack of English proficiency is a major obstacle to socialising with peers in the new environment. Olivia (15-year-old female) reports, 'Although I am befriending only Polish people at the moment, I try to make English friends but it is difficult, as I do not communicate as comfortably as they do.'

This supports the argument that the cultural capital that is valued within the host society may not be easily accessible to newly arrived young people in the short term (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). Julia (13 years old) migrated to Scotland two years ago. She immediately joined the local school, problems with communication in English became an obstacle to making friends in her new environment. The school did not

offer any 'social' support, and her Scottish peers began to ridicule her. She regressed and become introverted. Going to school became a sad necessity. She was not able to explain to her parents what was going on at school. Finally, her parents brought their depressed daughter to a psychotherapist, who became a mediator between parents and daughter. The mother reported:

Despite our trying to be with her and our coming to work here for her to have a good quality of life and opportunities, she is angry with us that we left Poland. We learnt during therapy that she became distant from us and even despises us because my husband and I work here in low status, physical jobs whereas in Poland we had high-skilled jobs and both worked in offices.

Julia's example shows that the working and social life of migrant parents can be partially confined within the ethnic and linguistic boundaries of their own community networks, whereas their children's education and socialisation requires them to encounter and engage with the host society, its culture and institutions. In the case of Polish migrants, on one side many parents may guide youths towards school. However, parents lack certain resources, such as knowledge of the language and of how the school system might work against school performance. For example, migrant status can affect the kinds of schools and the types of peer networks in which youth are embedded.

In order to succeed youth make use of social capital as a resource to cope with the difficulties in new settings ... to ease anxiety and isolation Hébert (2006: 125). Social networks can be used as adaptive strategies by migrant youth, helping them to make friends and improve their social status. When migrant youth accumulate social capital

through social networks in schools and neighbourhoods, social integration in the host country is more likely to occur (Hébert 2006).

Children usually adapt to the new culture more rapidly than their migrant parents (Portes and Rumbaut 201; Suárez-Orozco 2001; Suarez-Orozco and Qin (2006). This can have important implications on the home dynamics. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) noticed the danger of what they define as ‘dissonant acculturation’ occurring when children’s learning of English and American ways and simultaneously loss of the migrant culture outstrip their parents (53-54). Dissonant acculturation between parents and children can lead to serious conflict within the family (Foner 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez- Orozco, 2001). Alex (female, 14 years old) and her 12-year-old brother Arthur illustrate this point. The children learnt English quickly. Now they speak English much better than their parents do. The parents work in a meat-processing factory. They complained that their children are becoming distant. During the interview their mother said:

In Poland and at the beginning of our stay in Scotland, before the children learnt English, we felt like we were a family: we spent our time together. We talked to each other, and so on. Now, our children prefer to spend time with their Scottish peers. We are worried, because our children neglect us, they are aggressive toward us, and they let us know often that we are stupid and unsuccessful compared with their Scottish peers’ parents. They are ashamed of us because we do not speak English well. Now, our children frequently do not want to speak Polish at home so we do not know what they are

talking about. They reject their roots, their parents, and their family,
and that allows them to be accepted by their Scottish peers.

The case of Alex and Arthur shows that social capital does not always work to promote educational outcomes, and sometimes social relations within a family or in a peer group help to reinforce behaviours that work against academic achievement (Kao (2004). For some young people, socialisation into a new society may mean rebelling against their parental culture and values.. Coleman developed the concept of social capital to explain aspects of this phenomenon. As a result of undertaking research in Chicago's high schools, he found that young people were highly likely to be influenced by their peers on a range of issues and that students tended to see disapproval from friends as more important than disapproval from parents or teachers (Morrow (1999).

Frequently children act as translators for their parents who are not able to communicate in English. Gaby (14 years old) said, 'When I arrived I had a break and from September I went to school. We had no problem with enrolment and documents because my brother speaks English [the only person in the family who did so at the time].'

On the one hand, young people must be understood as active agents in the actual process of migration and settlement, when moving as part of a household. As research shows (Devine 2009; Holland, Reynolds, and Weller 2007; Orellana 2001), children are not mere recipients of parental culture, but can also be 'key contributors to processes of capital accumulation by the family' (Devine 2009: 526). In particular, because of their learning experiences in the classroom, children often become the cultural or language brokers to interpret the host society for their parents.

On the other hand, the reliance of parents and teachers on children as interpreters can often lead to some misunderstandings between the family and the school (Ryan et al. 2010). It can also mean that parents feel disempowered or humiliated as their children have more information and knowledge than the parents (Roer-Strier and Strier 2006: 109). This, together with the downward mobility of parents, challenges to traditional family roles and conflicts about plans to stay or return, may diminish the value of parents' cultural capital (Kelly and Lusi 2006; Lopez Rodriguez 2010) and impact on family dynamics.

Although the ethnic element is very important to consider regarding identity formation for migrant adolescents (Suárez-Orozco 2004), the majority of the young people who participated in this study attempted to build ethnically diverse relationships. As some examples in the article have shown, this is not always an easy process. Some of the young people's narratives suggest that they viewed migration as something that moved them away from their friends and other members of their family, which sometimes put them into a situation of isolation and loneliness. Natali (female, 15 years old) said, 'When my parents go to work now I have to stay alone sometimes. In Poland, there was always somebody around, my granny or granddad or my uncle, etc.' Young migrants are well aware of their feelings and understand the importance of adapting, as is demonstrated by Matt (male, 17 years old):

I had a dilemma before I came here that I was leaving everything, my friends, but somehow I had to go though all of that and now I have been living in Scotland for two years, but maintain many contacts with Poland, so I do have friends to come back to. Of

course, I do miss Poland. Sometimes I go to my mum and say to her that I want to come back to Poland, but these thoughts go away. I like the people here, they are very friendly and I have never felt like a stranger.

Some of them frequently had a view on their future that was different from that of their parents. Some plan their future around Poland and make their decisions independent of whether their parents are to settle in the UK. Carol (16 years old) still feels sad that she had to leave her friends to go abroad two years ago, and she still thinks she would like to return to Poland. Carol said, 'When I think home I think Poland and imagine that I will go back there. All our extended family is in one town back home, this is our family town and I want to go back there one day.'

Many Polish migrants in the UK, including migrant youth, maintain strong transnational ties over sustained periods, and returning to their country of origin could still be an option for the future. Matt (17 years old) explained:

During this school break I will go to Poland for a month, I have got the ticket already... In general, I will stay here a few more years, maybe a bit longer to finish my education, and then in two or three years I want to go back to Poland. I am Polish and I do belong to my country. I did want to try something new, I found a good school here, but I do want to go back to Poland for sure. My dream is to open a small restaurant; we are making projects with my dad (in Poland) already, and I do have my dad's support.

The research shows that young people display different degrees of adjustment to their new country, leaving the way back open and incorporating both affective and instrumental dimensions of the cultures they traverse.

Conclusions

The research presented in this article supports the idea that migration relates equally to economic processes as it does to social and cultural issues. The cultural and social capital of migrants may impact their ability to adapt to their host society. A key feature of the social and cultural capital of young migrants and their families is that they are valued and given meaning according to particular social and spatial contexts. Scholars often see migration as a process of contradictory social mobility (Parreñas 2001), as individuals decide to abandon their higher-status jobs for better remunerated ones in the host country and they might experience downward mobility. This lack of transferability of cultural capital places migrant families and their offspring in a very difficult position. Often, migrant families experience downward social mobility on migration, as parents experience de-skilling and underemployment (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993).

At the same time, it could be observed that the way in which young people and their parents approach schools and education is strongly influenced by their pre-migration experiences and by the culture of their country of origin. Polish labour migrant families seem to draw on the culture capital originating from the educational practices in their home country. It may place them in a privileged position educationally and possibly professionally in comparison with some other minority groups and may position them ahead of white British working-class pupils (Lopez-Rodriguez 2010: 355).

On the other hand, limited language skills prevent Polish migrants from fully participating in the community, which is often related to the strong social capital and networks of co-ethnicity that might constrain migrant integration in the host society (Ryan et al. 2008). This was often the case of migrant parents who participated in the research. Young migrants usually integrate into the new culture more rapidly than their parents. Schools are the places where these young people socialise and first encounter in-depth contact with the host culture (Adams and Kirova 2006: 2). For some of the young people who participated in the research, socialisation into a new society happened to be the way of rebelling against their parental culture and values.

Communication between the schools and the parents is made more difficult, as parents of migrant children with poor language skills are often not aware of events for parents or of issues that affect their children's schooling. Frequently parents have to look for someone to help them to contact the school. Some schools use interpreters to help parents, whereas others lack the resources to offer such assistance. Sometimes the reliance of parents and teachers to use children as interpreters can often lead to misunderstandings between the family and the school. It can also mean that parents feel disempowered or humiliated as their children have more information and knowledge than the parents..

It is important that schools have the ability to communicate effectively with all parents. It can be mutually advantageous for migrant and host communities to provide widely available English-language classes to migrant adults (parents). There is a need for all schools to look at providing opportunities for foreign-language tuition, as this in itself can be a way to reduce cultural barriers in the classroom. Many researchers

have observed that migrant pupils achieve better outcomes when the school develops language policies and organises its curriculum and instruction in such a way that the cultural capital of young people and their families is strongly affirmed in all school interactions (Cummins 2000; Suarez-Orozco and Qin 2006). The cultural and language capital of the host society will significantly increase when schools open up to the linguistic, cultural and intellectual resources which migrant youth bring from their own homes (Cummins 2000).

There is a need for longitudinal studies among these the first generation young migrants who participated in this research in order to understand their experiences as they transition into adulthood. It would be interesting to follow their shift to adulthood and to ascertain how the migration experience impacts their development.

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